

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 AID-05 /074 W

-----010549Z 001408 /12

R 311312Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 900

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJECT: CONGRESS GEARS UP FOR DISTRIBUTING THE TICKETS

1. THE CONGRESS PARTY'S 12-MEMBER CENTRAL ELECTION COMMITTEE (CEC) IS SCHEDULED TO BEGIN MEETING IN DELHI ON FEB. 2 TO SELECT CONGRESS CANDIDATS FOR THE MARCH ELECTIONS TO THE LOK SABHA. THIS NOMINATION PROCESS IS ALSO KNOWN AS HANDING OUT "TICKETS". THE CEC IS COMPOSED OF PRIME MINISTER GANDHI, CONGRESS PRESIDENT D.K. BAROOAH, AGRICULTURE MINISTER JAGJIVAN RAM, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER Y.B. CHAVAN, FINANCE MINISTER C. SUBRAMANIAM., DEFENSE MINISTER BANSI LAL, CIVIL SUPPLIES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MINISTER SYED MIR QASIM, HOME MINISTER K. BRAHMANANDA REDDY, FORMER DEFENSE MINISTER SWARAN SINGH, WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER S.S. RAY, KOLLUR MALLAPPA (FORMER MEMBER OF THE RAJYA SABHA FROM KARNATAKA) AND SHANKAR DAYAL SINGH (MP FROM BIHAR). IN ADDITION, PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS MINISTER RAGHURAMAIAH, MINISTER OF STATE FOR HOME AFFAIRS OM MEHTA, AND MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO (AND CONGRESS PARTY TREASURER) P.C.SETHI ARE

"SPECIAL INVITEES" OF THE CEC.

2. FOR THE PAST SEVERAL DAYS STATE PRADESH CONGRESS COMMITTEES (PCC'S) HAD BEEN MEETING TO DRAW UP LISTS OF CONGRESS CANDIDATES FOR SUBMISSION TO THE PARTY HIGH COMMAND. THE USUAL PROCEDURE IS FOR THE STATE PCC'S TO SORT OUT CONFLICTING CANDIDATES CLAIMS AND QUALIFICATIONS AND SEND A LIST OF SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EACH CONSTITUENCY TO THE CEC. THE CEC NORMALLY APPROVES THE OVERWHELMING PROPORTION OF NOMINATIONS AND QUERIES ONLY A TINY HANDFUL WHO MAY FOR ONE RASON OR ANOTHER BE SEEN BY DELHI AS UNDESIRABLE CANDIDATES. A MAJORITY OF PCC'S THIS YEAR HAVE DECIDED SIMPLY TO SEND ALONG LONG LISTS OF ALTERNATIVE CANDIATES AND LEAVE IT TO THE PRIME MINISTER TO CHOOSE. THIS HAS OCCASIONALLY AHAPPENED IN ONE OR ANOTHER STATE IN PREVIOUS ELECTIONS, BUT IT IS THE FIRST TIME IT IS BEING DONE ON A WHOLESALE BASIS. THIS IS THE RESULT OF FACTIONAL INFIGHTING IN STATE CONGRESS ORGANIZATIONS, UNCERTAINTY AMONG PCC'S OVER HOW TO RESPOND TO YOUTH CONGRESS CLAIMS FOR SEATS, HEIGHTENED DEFERENCE TO THE PRIME MINISTER, AND A DESIRE ON THE PART OF POLITICALLY INSECURE CHIEF MINISTERS AND PRADESH CONGRESS PRESIDENTS TO DUCK TOUGH DECISIONS AND LET THE PRIME MINISTER TAKE WHATEVER "FLAK" THE CANDIDATE SELECTION PROCESS PRODUCES. THE 11 PCC'S WHICH HAVE THUS LAID THE SELECTION PROCESS IN MRS. GANDHI'S LAP SO FAR ARE ASSAM, BIHAR, HARYANA, HIMACHAL PRADESH, JAMMU AND KASHMIR, MADHYA PRADESH, ORISSA, PUNJAB, RAJASTHAN, UTTAR PRADESH AND WEST BENGAL.

3. GUJARAT, KERALA, MAHARASHTRA, AND ANDHRA ARE THE ONLY FOUR STATES WHICH HAVE THUS FAR DETERMINED THEY WILL PROCEED IN THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NORMAL WAY AND SUBMIT A SPECIFIC LIST OF CANDIDATES FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSTITUENCIES TO DELHI.

4. THE FACTIONAL INFIGHTING WAS PERHAPS MOST ACUTE IN THE WEST BENGAL PCC. THE STATE CONGRESS LEADERSHIP WAS FACED WITH A LIST OF 373 NAMES SENT FORWARD BY THE DISTRICT COMMITTEES. IT QUICKLY DEADLOCKED OWING MAINLY TO A DISPUTE BETWEEN THE SUPPORTERS OF SANJAY GANDHI ON THE ONE HAND AND THE P.R. DAS MUNSHI/LAKSHMI KANTA BOSE FACTION ON THE OTHER. EACH FACTION PROPOSED A LIT GIVING THE OTHER LITTLE OR NO REPRESENTATION. A STALEMATE ENSUED AND THE PCC EVENTUALLY RESOLVED TO SUBMIT THE ENTIRE IST OF 373 NAMES TO MRS. GANDHI FOR SELECTION OF THE FINAL 42 CANDIDATES. WHILE THE LEADERSHIP WAS MEETING INSIDE THE HALL, THE DISPUTE BETWEEN THE TWO FACTIONS WAS REFLECTED OUTSIDE PARTY HEADQUARTERS IN SCUFFLES BETWEEN THEIR FOLLOWERS. PRESS REPORTS CLAIM THAT THE SANJAY FACTION OF THE PCC MET SEPARATELY LATER AND DREW UP A LIST OF 50 NAMES WHICH WAS GIVEN TO CENTRAL MINISTERS CHATTOPADHYAYA AND MUKHERJEE TO TAKE TO DELHI FOR SUBMISSION TO THE PRIME MINISTER. THIS LIST REPORTEDLY DID NOT INCLUDE DAS MUNSHI

OR ANY OF HIS OR BOSE'S FOLLOWERS. CHATTOPADHYAYA LATER DENIED
THAT HE WAS CARRYING ANY SUCH LIST TO DELHI.
SCHNEIDER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NATIONAL ELECTIONS
Control Number: n/a
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Sent Date: 31-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977NEWDE01416
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770034-1250
Format: TEL
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t1977012/aaaaabvv.tel
Line Count: 119
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 50619ed1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
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Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3507915
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CONGRESS GEARS UP FOR DISTRIBUTING THE TICKETS
TAGS: PINT, IN
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/50619ed1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009